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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR U/S GLASSMAN, NEA, NEA/ELA AND NEA/PPD
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR S/P AND DRL/NESCA
NSC FOR PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/2028
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: GOE PREVENTS ACTIVIST FROM TRAVELING TO THE YOUTH
MOVEMENTS SUMMIT

REF: A. VASQUEZ-WHITE E-MAIL 11/25
[1](#)B. CAIRO 2431

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) On December 2, Egyptian State Security briefly detained Al-Ghad opposition party member and activist Ahmed Nassar at the Cairo airport before releasing him, and specifically banned him from traveling to the December 3-5 Alliance for Youth Movements Summit in New York. Nassar told us that he had contacted Al-Ghad and asked for their help in persuading State Security to lift the travel ban. Al-Ghad members subsequently notified the media of the travel ban on Nassar, and sent mass SMS messages apprising their contacts of the situation.

[1](#)2. (C) After we received Nassar's agreement to intercede on his behalf, the Ambassador contacted Deputy Foreign Minister Wafaa Bassim, in FM Aboul-Gheit's absence, to urge the GOE to allow Nassar to travel to the summit. Bassim said she would try to help. The Ambassador also raised the issue with People's Assembly Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Mustafa El-Fekki, who relayed the information to the State Security representative at the assembly in the Ambassador's presence. The DCM also contacted Cairo State Security Branch Chief General Saleh Hegazy and pressed him to allow Nassar to travel. Hegazy called us back to say that State Security looked into the issue, and could confirm that Nassar was banned from traveling due to "Egyptian security concerns."

[1](#)3. (C) We informed the other summit invitee who is planning to attend, April 6 Movement activist Ahmed Saleh (ref B), that State Security banned Nassar from traveling and detained him briefly at the airport. Saleh told us he will decide whether to try to travel as planned December 3, and expressed ambivalence about U.S. intervention on his behalf, wondering if it would do more harm than good.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: We believe that State Security officer Hegazy's response to us is probably the final GOE word on allowing Nassar to travel, but we recommend holding off on public criticism of the GOE until December 3 when we will know whether Saleh has been able to travel. Therefore, if reporters raise the issue today, we recommend the Department use guidance from November 25 (ref A) that explains the summit, adding that we are looking into the reports of today's detention and travel ban. We will work with NEA to draft press guidance for December 3 criticizing the GOE's refusal to allow activists to travel to the U.S. for the summit.
SCOBEY